

E 312
.17
.H67

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00005079676





COPYRIGHT, 1897, BY H. SCHERVEE.

GEORGE FRISBIE HOAR

Born August 29, 1826.

Died September 30, 1904.

The Character of Washington.

AN ADDRESS BY

SENATOR GEORGE FRISBIE HOAR,

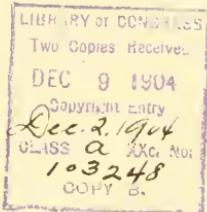
BEING HIS LAST PUBLIC UTTERANCE,

WITH OTHER SPEECHES,

DELIVERED JUNE 17TH, 1904. PUBLISHED FROM THE STENOGRAPHIC
NOTES OF MISS M. LOUISE JACKSON.

BOSTON :
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY,
1904.

E 312
17
H6



~~103248~~

COPYRIGHT, 1904, BY R. H. W. DWIGHT.

31

The City of Worcester, having accepted from the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the gift of a number of engraved copies of the Stuart portrait of Washington, to be placed in all the principal public school buildings of the city, at the suggestion of the School Committee exercises were held, and the presentation took place, on the afternoon of Friday, June 17th, 1904, at the English High School Hall.

Senator George Frisbie Hoar, a member of the Society, was present, and, although by reason of the condition of his health, not originally assigned to speak, made a brief address in response to the request of the chairman which proved to be one of his most interesting, eloquent and delightful,—and which, alas! was the last public utterance of that eminent man.

The historian of the Society being charged with the duty of recording such events, had arranged for a stenographic report of the entire proceedings which the Society now publishes as a memorial to its distinguished member. Senator Hoar spoke upon the character of Washington, a subject which he was abundantly qualified to discuss, without the impediment of a manuscript, or the least indication of any abatement of his extraordinary powers. His apt wit, discriminating analysis, just characterization, fund of anecdote and grace of diction were never more in evidence. The brief speeches which had preceded served but as a setting to his,—a sparkling gem of oratory, worthy of any place or any treasury. As he said in closing, the occasion was one of the most beautiful and successful he had ever known.

At the conclusion, how few of his auditors realized that his last public utterance had been made; that the eloquent lips would all too soon be silent; but what more fitting subject could have been chosen for the last words of any American orator than his theme, “The Character of Washington.”

EBEN FRANCIS THOMPSON.

WORCESTER, MASS., October 18, 1904.

EXERCISES ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF COPIES OF THE STUART PORTRAIT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON.

As a result of the acceptance by the City of Worcester of the offer of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution to present framed copies of the Stuart portrait of Washington for all the principal public school buildings of Worcester, Committees of Arrangements and Reception were appointed as follows :

On the part of the School Committee :

CHARLES R. JOHNSON, ESQ., *Chairman,*

REV. VINCENT E. TOMLINSON, DR. LOUIS P. DE GRANDPRE,
WILLIAM H. COOK, ESQ., DR. FRANCIS A. UNDERWOOD,
HOMER P. LEWIS, ESQ., JOSEPH BEALS, ESQ.

On the part of the Sons of the Revolution :

HON. STEPHEN SALISBURY, *Chairman,*

SAMUEL S. GREEN, ESQ., HON. WILLIAM T. FORBES,
EBEN F. THOMPSON, ESQ., J. RUSSEL MARBLE, ESQ.,
GEORGE B. INCHES, ESQ., HON. DANIEL KENT,
GEN. FRED W. WELLINGTON, JOHN H. COES, ESQ.,
. FRANK A. LELAND, ESQ.

On June 17th, at 2.30 P. M., the following gentlemen met in the office of his Honor the Mayor, Walter H. Blodget, as a reception committee :

HIS HONOR THE MAYOR, WALTER H. BLODGET,
CHARLES R. JOHNSON, Esq., Chairman of School Committee,
REV. VINCENT E. TOMLINSON,
WILLIAM H. COOK, Esq., and
DR. LOUIS P. DE GRANDPRE, of the School Committee,
HON. STEPHEN SALISBURY,
HON. WILLIAM T. FORBES,
J. RUSSEL MARBLE, Esq.,
HON. DANIEL KENT,
EBEN F. THOMPSON, Esq.,
JOHN H. COES, Esq.,
GEN. FRED W. WELLINGTON,
FRANK A. LELAND, Esq.,
HOMER P. LEWIS, Esq., Superintendent of Worcester Public
Schools,
JOSEPH BEALS, Esq., Secretary of the School Committee.

The Committee took carriages and repaired to the station, and upon the arrival of the train received Richard Henry Winslow Dwight, President of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Walter Gilman Page, Registrar of the General Society, Rev. Edward Hunting Rudd, Chaplain of the State Society, and Harry Young, Esq., of the Board of Managers.

The Committee and guests drove to the English High School Hall, where they were joined by United States Senator, the Hon. George Frisbie Hoar, a life member of the Society, the Hon. Henry A. Marsh, and the Rev. John J. Putnam, a member of the Society and himself the son of a Revolutionary soldier. All of the above named gentlemen occupied seats upon the platform.

The exercises, beginning at 3.30 P. M., were in accordance with the following programme, and the addresses were as follows:

Programme.

“Grand American Fantasia,” *Bendix.*

HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA.

INTRODUCTION by the Presiding Officer,
CHARLES R. JOHNSON, Chairman of the School Committee.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME by His Honor,
WALTER H. BLODGET, Mayor.

RESPONSE in behalf of the Sons of the Revolution,
RICHARD HENRY WINSLOW DWIGHT, President.

CORNET SOLO, “Tramp, Tramp, Tramp,” . . . *Rollinson.*
EDWARD S. MCGRATH.

PRESENTATION OF PORTRAITS,
EBEN FRANCIS THOMPSON.

RESPONSES IN ACCEPTANCE,
REV. VINCENT E. TOMLINSON,
SUPT. HOMER P. LEWIS,
DR. LOUIS P. DE GRANDPRE.

THE ART OF STUART,
WALTER GILMAN PAGE, Registrar of the General Society.

THE CHARACTER OF WASHINGTON,
Address by Senator *GEORGE FRISBIE HOAR.*

“The American Patrol,” *Meacham.*
HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA.

MR. JOHNSON:

Ladies and Gentlemen:—We are met on this historic day, the one hundred and twenty-ninth anniversary of Bunker Hill, to publicly receive and properly acknowledge the valuable gift to the City of Worcester from the Society of the Sons of the Revolution. This beautiful gift is an engraving in commemoration of him who was called, “First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen;” of whom it was said by his distinguished Virginian eulogist, “He sleeps beneath the shade of the everlasting laurel, which stretches its mighty branches athwart the lapse of ages;” but of whom it may be said, as did Tacitus of Agricola,—In the affections of his people he lives and will live forever.

The official representatives of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution are here present,—and to them and to all a welcome will now be extended by his Honor the Mayor.

I have the pleasure of introducing to you Walter H. Blodget, Mayor of Worcester.

MAYOR BLODGET:

Mr. Chairman, Honored Guests, Sons of the Revolution, Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls,—for I see there are quite a good many boys and girls here to-day, and I only wish that there were more here. In behalf of the City of Worcester I extend to you a most cordial and hearty welcome to our city. We are glad to have you come here; and we are glad to welcome you coming, as you do, on such a noble errand.

The work which this organization is doing at present is certainly a work which is very commendable. Not only do

we, as men and women, at the present time appreciate, and benefit from these gifts, but our children and our children's children will be better off for the gifts which this Society is making to our city, and to other cities and towns throughout the State.

We are certainly very glad to have these representative men come here, and I know that we all appreciate the gift which they are about to present to us, and we shall certainly be very thankful to them for it, and in behalf of the city I welcome you here.

MR. JOHNSON: It now gives me pleasure to introduce to you the President of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution, Richard Henry Winslow Dwight, whose ancestors in many lines were engaged in our colonial struggles and through the Revolutionary war:—President Dwight, of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution.

MR. DWIGHT:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Pupils of the Worcester Public Schools:—It is a pleasant duty this afternoon, which the Society of the Sons of the Revolution is permitted to perform.

Our Society was organized not for the purpose of self-glorification but for patriotic work, because our members and officers appreciate that patriotic work has many ramifications, and that our responsibilities to the state and nation, lying along the lines for which our Society was organized, are of abundant proportions.

The ancestors of many of those who are to-day among our foremost citizens came over in the "Mayflower." Many others are descended from those who arrived more

recently. It is also true that those who are likely to carry the burden of our Government in the years to come, are to-day flocking to our shores in the steerage of the "Saxonia" or the "Kaiser Wilhelm."

I recently attended patriotic exercises at the Paul Revere School in Boston, and I presume that conditions there are not unlike those in Worcester, where your great industries employ so much labor. In that school district there are 2,700 pupils, 75% foreign born, 95% children of Russian and Italian parents. Some few years ago in this same section of the city of Boston, the same percentage would have been of German and Irish parentage. Can we not believe that the descendants of our Russian and Italian population are to make splendid citizens, provided the teachers are suitably encouraged through our school committees and patriotic societies?

On the walls of the Paul Revere Kindergarten are pictures of several American patriots, and when, during our visit, the teacher pointed to a picture and asked these children of foreign parents who it was, every hand in the Kindergarten went up, so anxious were the youngsters, now full-fledged Americans, to show that they knew. When the teacher asked a small Hebrew boy, he said, "General Prescott." The next child who caught the teacher's eye was a small Italian girl, who answered the teacher's question as to what General Prescott had once said: "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes."

So the exercises proceeded showing that these small tots were being started aright. I came away tremendously impressed with the good results of the patriotic work done in that school, and feeling optimistic as to our country's future.

The largest undertaking now in progress in Boston, when completed, will have over the door the name of a young man who came to this country penniless.

A Boston pastor, as favorably known for his distinguished ability as for the historical church over which he presides, landed in this country with six cents in his pocket; to-day he is one of Harvard's overseers.

The gentleman who will follow me will express to you the pleasure it gives our Society to join you here to-day, and I leave it for him to fittingly refer to the portrait of our first President, George Washington.

MR. JOHNSON: The next speaker is well known to the citizens of Worcester, a former member of the City Government and of the General Court, and one who has done more, I think, than any other one person to bring about the matter which we celebrate here to-day—the presentation of these portraits. By his untiring zeal, unflagging industry and uniform good humor, he has brought about the gifts which we are to receive on this occasion.

He is of distinguished ancestry, through many lines. His great-great-grandfather, about this time one hundred and twenty-nine years ago, was very busily engaged on the field of Bunker Hill,—that was Sergeant Timothy Thompson, and I have now the honor of introducing to you his descendant, lawyer, scholar, and author, Eben Francis Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON:

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mayor, Fellow Citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen:—He would be bold indeed who would not be embarrassed by so eloquent an introduction.

The Society of the Sons of the Revolution is to-day your guest. Although we come bearing gifts, we feel sure that our coming occasions no undue apprehension. We have deferred, Mr. Chairman, to your suggestion that our simple gift should be fittingly accompanied by simple exercises; that these portraits which are to speak from the walls of Worcester schoolhouses in the years to come should be presented in a manner in some degree worthy of their subject.

The Sons of the Revolution enrolls in its membership those descended from participants in our great Revolutionary struggle, but its membership, we trust, is not a badge of heredity alone. We are engaged in a friendly and generous rivalry with kindred and sister societies in the work of preserving the memorials of the historic past. And I would like to emphasize at this time the fact that we derive largely, our local inspiration at least, from the work of the women's societies.

We come to-day as in the days of old, when transfers were made and a part delivered in token of the transfer of the whole, and make livery of seizin of this portrait for all that are to adorn the walls of Worcester's schoolhouses.

In this splendid presence, when I consider that on this very platform sits one whom four score years have not bowed, and whose eye glows as with the fires of '76,—the son of a Revolutionary soldier,—I am reminded how close is our connection with the historic past. And when I consider that here, too, is a great publicist, a pilot whose chart has ever been the chart of Jefferson, and whose compass pointing to the pole star of Liberty was ever the compass of Washington,—by official denotement and universal acclaim the first citizen of Massachusetts, and one of the few

of the world's great orators (Applause), I am counselled that I must be brief even if I may not preserve a golden silence.

The character of Washington was too large, too well rounded for ready characterization. It cannot adequately be considered in the time allotted to me. He was disciplined in a school of adversity. His life was filled with peril and adventure. His early service in the years preceding the French and Indian War was amid constant danger in the lonely forest from the attacks of the treacherous red man. In the disastrous campaign of Braddock he underwent the experience which was to steel his fortitude for the trial of the Revolutionary conflict which was to follow. We see him amid the reverses and suffering at Valley Forge and through the long night before the dawn of Yorktown.

That gracious presence was not unknown to Worcester, for on July 1st, 1775, he came to this city on his way to Cambridge to take command of the American Armies,—and also in 1789, when he was met by Worcester citizens at the Leicester hills, on his journey to Cambridge, and rode through our streets, past the spot under the shadow of this very hill where, thirteen years before, the Declaration of Independence was first read in New England.

The city of Worcester is famous as having a greater variety of production than any other city of its size in the world. Its manufactures range from those so small that their inspection involves the use of a microscope to those of such gigantic proportions that they tax modern transportation facilities. The sound of her looms is heard in every land wherever the rising or the setting sun gilds Christian spire or barbaric minaret, and her

wire, like the famous belt of Puck, girdles the globe. With such manifestations of industrial progress shall she not still continue to stand for high ideals of civic righteousness?

These portraits will speak not only to the children of those who have come across the sea, but to us, that we may renew our high ideals.

Accept, then, Mr. Chairman, our simple gift in the spirit in which it is offered, in the hope that it may contribute its small part to the patriotic education of the youth of to-day who are to become the citizens of to-morrow.

MR. JOHNSON: Rev. Vincent E. Tomlinson, one of the most distinguished members of the committee, as he is one of the most eloquent clergymen of the city, will now respond on behalf of the school committee.

MR. TOMLINSON:

Mr. Chairman, Sons of the Revolution:—With a sense of deep gratitude and unalloyed appreciation we receive your noble gift. We recognize that it is as gracious as it is generous. There may be those in our goodly city who have wondered what was the aim of your body, but surely they cannot doubt how high it is and how noble, after this act of yours,—this patriotic and generous act; for by it you have said to the people of this city, and to the people of this Commonwealth—for this is not an exceptional act on your part, but characteristic of what you are doing continually—that your great aim is to perpetuate this nation of ours; that you wish to see that this land which has been bequeathed to us by our fathers,—this good land,—is handed down to those who shall come after us, to be the

same home of peace and prosperity that we have found it; and you have taken a means, it seems to me, most wise to do your part to preserve our nation. Knowing that the influence which is brought to bear upon the youth of the land is the strongest,—that in the formative period of life, impressions can be made that are lasting,—you have chosen this beautiful means of presenting our city over two score of these Gilbert Stuart portraits of the Father of his Country; and I would have you, invited guests and friends, look beyond this room where we are gathered to see the large influence of this gift of yours.

The reception of this gift to-day is representative. Members of the School Board, members of the City Government, members of all the schools, are present here, and in this representative way we receive very gratefully your gift. But we would have you look beyond this room. We would have you see the fifty school buildings, or more, in our city, whose walls will be graced with copies of this portrait which is before us. And we are glad to say to you that in each building where the portrait of President Washington is hung, appropriate exercises will be held; and I think I can speak, in fact, I do speak for the School Board when I say that we invite your co-operation in this further work that lies with us,—that of suitably presenting these portraits to the schools of the city. We invite your help in this work that lies before us. With the opening of the school work in the fall, these gifts will be presented to the various schools and appropriate exercises will be held; and you are to remember, too, that not only those who are of school age now, and who will be influenced by the words that shall be spoken in the presentation of these gifts are to be benefited by your act, but you are to look

further still and see the children of the coming generation, children yet unborn, who, gathering in our schools, will look upon that benign face and receive an inspiration of patriotism and love of country. For it seems to me that if we are to preserve our nation we must cherish those high ideals which have marked our fathers.

Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke these noble words, "What greater calamity can fall upon a nation than loss of reverence? Then all things go to decay. The eye of youth is not lighted by the hope of other worlds, and age is without honor. Society lives in trifles, and when men die we do not mention them."

That our youth may be inspired with reverence, that they may have before them a high ideal of what it is to be an American citizen, you hang these portraits upon the walls of our schoolrooms. Blessing will attend and follow this act of yours. Many and many a life, I make bold to say, will be a better life because of what you have done for our city; and this city of ours, whose record is not a small one in patriotic deeds, responds most gratefully to this act of yours, and in behalf of the people of this city we extend to you our heartiest thanks.

MR. JOHNSON: The gentleman who will follow is triply honored, having had three grandfathers who were in the Revolution. I have the honor at this time to introduce to you the beloved superintendent of Worcester's schools, Homer P. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:—I am afraid that in the interests of history I shall have to correct the impression

which you may have received from my introduction. I only had two grandfathers,—three great-grandfathers in the revolutionary army. (Laughter.)

It falls to me to speak briefly in behalf of the schools of Worcester, and to express our heartiest thanks to you, Sons of the Revolution, for these splendid gifts. They will not only adorn the walls of our schools. They will,—as has been said by one of the speakers,—speak from those walls, and they will speak of patriotism and of public virtue. They will, I hope, remind our children that such societies as yours exist to keep alive the memories, the best memories, of our history. They can convey no better lesson; and they will convey that lesson, I am sure, of duty to country, and of the consideration for the rights of all that may be derived from a study of Washington's life.

“Custom cannot stale the infinite variety” of profit that may come from the study of Washington.

MR. JOHNSON: One of the important factors in the success of the Revolutionary War was the French Alliance. I suppose it is doubtful whether the effort of our fathers would have succeeded had it not been for the intervention of the Court of France; and of all those who came in the company of soldiers from France none was more favored with the acquaintance, the friendship of Washington, than was Lafayette. He was the leader on his side in that great contest. Of his coming our own Emerson has sung:

“ Oh, bounteous seas that never fail,
 Oh, day remembered yet;
Oh, happy port that spied the sail
 That wafted Lafayette.

“ Pole-star of Light, in Europe's night,
 That never wandered from the right.”

We have with us a member of the School Committee, descended from that distinguished race, and it now gives me pleasure to introduce to you Dr. Louis P. de Grandpre, who will speak to you, as I think they say in the commencement programmes, in *lingua Gallica*.

DR. DE GRANDPRE:

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen:—I deeply appreciate the invitation of Mr. Chairman to speak a few words in French. It is a great favor to me, although it may not be so great a favor to you; but I am sure that a great many of those who are here this afternoon understand French, namely, our esteemed citizens, Mr. Salisbury, Judge Forbes, whom I have had occasion to meet at L'Alliance Français, and Mr. Thompson, whom you have just heard.

I have an idea that Mr. Chairman, in inviting me to speak in French, did so in the interests of peace and harmony, and I will tell you why,—because he knows that whenever I speak in English I have to take issue with Webster or Worcester on the question of pronunciation. Nevertheless, I am very hopeful.

I wish to offer my most sincere thanks for his courtesy and for his homage to France and the French language. I don't know that the French language needs to have any excuses offered in its behalf for being spoken on an occasion such as this, when I consider that General Lafayette, at the different battles of the Revolutionary War, and especially at the battle of Yorktown, used to command his men in French.

A young French officer desiring to enlist in the American Army during the War of the Revolution was asked

by General Washington the usual questions,—“Age?” “Twenty-nine,” said the young officer. “Nationality?” “French.” “Religion?” Then the young officer smilingly replied,—“General, if you ask me of what faith, of what creed I am, I answer that I am of the Catholic faith; but if you ask me of what religion I am, I answer that I am, and so are my men, of the American religion.”

This answer, Ladies and Gentlemen, might apply to all those who inhabit this land of Liberty. Whatever may be our language, whatever may be our creed, our faith,—every one and all are of the same spirit, the same religion, the American religion.

Mesdames et Messieurs:—On me prie de rappeler, en quelques mots, la part prise par la France dans la conquête de l’Indépendance Américaine. Malgré mon incompétence, j’accepte avec plaisir. C’est un hommage qu’on veut rendre à la France et la langue française, parce que c’est en français qu’on m’invite à parler.

De toutes les langues étrangères parlées en ce pays, la langue française est la plus aimée et la plus recherchée.

Si on admire la langue française, ses beautés, ses richesses, sa clarté et ses harmonies, c’est qu’on admire plus encore le peuple de génie qui a écrit dans cette langue les plus grands chefs d’œuvre de la pensée humaine; les plus grands comme les plus nombreux.

Au—dessus des droits à l’admiration que donnent à la France sa prodigieuse activité intellectuelle et son génie, se placent, pour le peuple américain, les droits qu’elle s’est acquis à sa reconnaissance.

La France a été bonne, elle a été généreuse, elle a été chevaleresque à l’égard des Etats Unis.

Que vient-on nous parler de raisons d’Etat, de motifs

d'intérêt? Même la France officielle, représentée par Rochambeau, a été généreuse.

La guerre américaine lui a couté la somme énorme, à l'époque, de un milliard deux cent millions de francs, soit un peu plus de deux cent millions de dollars. Cette somme, il lui fallut l'emprunter. Les intérêts onéreux de cette nouvelle charge produisirent un déficit considérable qui fut la cause principale de la convocation des Etats Généraux. Et la convocation des Etats Généraux, on le sait, amena la chute la royauté. La monarchie française, en donnant naissance à la république américaine, avait hâté le moment de sa mort.

Et la France chevaleresque représentée par Lafayette, obéissait elle à des considerations d'intérêt?

“Mon cœur est enrôlé, je suis gagné à la cause américaine,” répondait Lafayette à Franklin lequel, tout en remerciant Lafayette de ses offres de services, se croyait, tenu de lui représenter la condition désespérée où se trouvait l'armée américaine.

“Votre cause est désespérée, dites-vous, c'est précisément le moment de lui venir en aide.” . . . “Mais vous partez sans le consentement du roi. Vous vous exposez à la confiscation de vos biens. Puis nous n'avons pas seulement de vaisseaux à mettre à votre disposition.”

“Qu'à cela ne tienne, j'en frêterai moi-même, à mes propres frais.” . . . “Mais nous n'avons pas d'argent pour la solde de vos soldats.” . . . “Qu'importe, je les paierai moi-même. J'affecte à cette fin la somme de deux cent cinquante mille francs.”

Qu'on me montre dans l'histoire un plus bel exemple de générosité. La vaillante épée de la France, dans l'es-

pace de trois quarts de siècle, a aidé à briser les liens de deux peuples : Du peuple américain à Yorktown, et du peuple italien à Solferino.

Combattre, comme Washington, pour l'indépendance de son pays est admirable, mais plus admirable encore est de combattre, comme Lafayette, pour la seule idée de Justice !

En 1783, se signait à Versailles un traité, le document historique le plus important des temps modernes,—le traité, qui, en reconnaissant l'Indépendance des Etats-Unis, en faisant naître à la liberté le peuple américain, devait déplacer le centre de gravité du monde. Ce traité fut signé par le France, par l'Angleterre et par les Etats-Unis. La jeune république avait délégué, pour signer en son nom, trois représentants, puis le président du congrès devait contre signer.

Concitoyens franco américains, ne nous est-il pas permis d'éprouver un sentiment de fierté en retrouvant au bas de ce traité de Versailles que j'appellerai l'acte de naissance de la République Américaine, en retrouvant, dis-je, sur quatre signatures, trois noms français, tous trois petit-fils de Français venus de France à la suite de la révocation de l'édit de Nantes : John Jay, Henry Laurens et Edias Boudinot, le quatrième est celui de l'immortel Benjamin Franklin.

Le souvenir de la France mérite de vivre éternellement dans le cœur des Américains.

On se rappellera toujours qu'à l'époque la plus sombre de la révolution, lorsque les soldats de Washington, écrasés sous le poids des privations, des misères et de la faim voyaient s'évanouir tout espoir de succès, désespéraient de jamais voir se lever à leur horizon l'astre bienfaisant de la

liberté,—on se rappellera toujours qu'alors la France, comme un génie consolateur, apparut sur la scène et mit son épée et son or au service de notre cause, sauvant ainsi de la destruction l'arbre naissant de la liberté sur ce continent. Ça été le malheur de la France quelquefois mais ce sera sa gloire toujours d'avoir distribué ses sympathies son cœur, son sang partout où il y a eu des grandes causes à défendre.

MR. JOHNSON: The gentleman who is to follow is descended from Captain James Page, of the 4th Massachusetts Regiment in the Revolutionary Army. He is descended by four lines of descent from Revolutionary families. He is an artist of reputation,—known throughout the country, and I have great pleasure in introducing to you Walter Gilman Page, Registrar of the General Society of the Sons of the Revolution.

MR. PAGE:

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen, Pupils of the Worcester Schools:—It gives me great pleasure to be present this afternoon to represent our National Society and to speak a brief word for Gilbert Stuart, one of the greatest of portrait painters, and certainly the greatest portrait painter born on this soil.

As Americans, we shall ever be proud of our Washington; we shall ever be grateful. We shall, also, though in a lesser degree, be grateful for the man who, through his genius, perpetuated the features of our first President, not only for us, but for generations yet to come.

There are altogether thirty known portraits of Washington, covering a period of twenty-six years. As early

as May 15, 1785, Washington wrote as follows: "I am so inured to the touches of the painter's pencil that I am now altogether at their beck, and sit like Patience on a monument whilst they are delineating the lines of my face. It is a proof of what habit and custom can effect. At first, I was as impatient at the request and at the results of the operation as could well be imagined. The next time, I consented very reluctantly. Now, no dray moves more readily to the thills than I do to the painter's chair."

Gilbert Stuart was born in Narragansett, Rhode Island, in 1755, and died in Boston in 1828. He had the usual difficulties of the embryo artist up to the time he was fifteen years of age. About the year 1770, he became acquainted with a certain Cosmo Alexander, who came over to this country from London to spend a few months here, and on his return he took Stuart with him. Shortly after his return, Mr. Alexander died, and Stuart was obliged to return to America, as he was not sufficiently advanced in his profession to make his own way. He was fortunate enough upon his return to obtain some commissions and had fair success; so much so that we find him once more, in three years, sailing for England,—leaving Boston about ten days before the Battle of Bunker Hill. He entered the studio of Benjamin West, at that time President of the Royal Academy, and also an American, as you know,—and from this date he began to reap fame and fortune, soon taking a place nearly equal to the best artists of his day; and there is no doubt that if he had remained in England he would have attained the highest rank among the artists of that country.

Shortly after the close of the War of the Revolution, Stuart returned to America, and in this connection I should

like to quote from what another American artist, Washington Allston, wrote, shortly after Stuart's death: "But admired and patronized as he was, he chose to return to his native country. He was impelled to this step, as he often declared, by the desire to give to America a faithful portrait of Washington, and thus, in some measure, to associate his own with the name of the Father of his Country." We see that his ambition was justified in the sublime head which he has left to us.

Gilbert Stuart was not only one of the first painters of his time, but must have been admitted by all who had the opportunity of knowing him to have been, whatever his art, an extraordinary man,—one who would have found distinction in any profession or walk of life. His mind was of a strong and original cast; his perceptions as clear as they were just, and in the power of illustration he has rarely been equalled. On almost every subject, more especially on such as were connected with his art, his conversation was marked by wisdom and knowledge,—while the uncommon precision and elegance of his language seemed even to receive an additional grace from his manner, which was that of the well-bred gentleman. Narrations and anecdotes with which his knowledge of men of the world had stored his memory, and which he often gave with great beauty and dramatic effect, were not infrequently employed by Mr. Stuart in a way and with an address peculiar to himself. From this store it was his custom to draw largely while occupied with his sitters, apparently for their amusement, but really for the purpose of calling to the surface some trace of the natural character. But these glimpses of character, mixed as they are in all respects with so much that belongs to every age and zone,

would be of little use to the ordinary observer,—for the faculty of distinguishing between the responsive and permanent—in other words, between the conventional expression which lies very close to the special indication of the individual mind is indeed no common one; and by no one with whom we are acquainted was this faculty possessed in so marked a degree.

It was this which enabled him to animate his canvas, not with the appearance of mere general life, but with that peculiar life which separates the humblest individual from his kind. Were other evidence wanting, this evidence alone would establish his position as a man of genius, in that it is the privilege of genius, alas, to measure happiness the highest and the lowest. In his art there has no one ever surpassed him in embodying, if we may so speak, these transient apparitions of the soul. In a word, Gilbert Stuart was, in its widest sense, a philosopher in his art. He really understood its principles, as his works bear witness,—whether as to lines and colors or lights and shadows,—showing that sense of perception of the whole which stamps the man of genius. He never allowed the miscellaneous troubles of his life to tinge his work with the least shadow of jealousy, and where praise was due he gave it freely, and with a generosity that showed he had a pleasure in praising. To the younger artists he was uniformly kind and indulgent, and most liberal of his advice, which no one ever properly asked but that he received it in a manner no less courteous than impressive.

He first met his illustrious subject at an evening reception, and accustomed as Stuart was to eminent men, he often said that no living man ever inspired such a feeling of reverence; and it was not until he had had several inter-

views that he was able to feel that he could give the requisite concentration of mind to his work.

At this time he received a very flattering commission from the city of Halifax to paint the portrait of the Duke of Kent, father of Queen Victoria, and a ship of war was placed at his disposal to convey him to Halifax, but he declined this honor.

Stuart painted his portrait of Washington in Philadelphia in a house which is still standing on the corner of Fifth and Chestnut streets. The original portrait from which this reproduction is taken is not finished. So far as the face is concerned, it is. The reproduction does not show as much as the original canvas. The reason for this portrait not having been finished was that Stuart, after he had completed the head, found that making replicas, or copies, was a great source of income to him. Washington willingly consented to accept a copy in place of this portrait. Stuart also had a strong desire to retain the original that he might leave it to his family upon his death. After Stuart's death, the original portrait was sold by his widow to a number of gentlemen, who, in turn, presented it to the Boston Athenæum,—hence it has attained the designation of the Athenæum portrait of Washington.

In concluding, no better word has been said for this portrait than what has been said by Washington Allston, that "A nobler personification of wisdom and goodness, reposing in the majesty of a serene countenance, is not to be found on canvas."

MR. JOHNSON:—There is one part not on the programme which I think you are all waiting for and would be glad to hear. Mr. Thompson has most eloquently

alluded to a son of the Revolution here present. We have with us an eminent son of the Revolution,—a descendant of two signers of the Declaration of Independence,—our own distinguished fellow townsman, Senator Hoar, descendant of Samuel Adams and of Roger Sherman; we all desire to hear him, I am sure.

MR. HOAR:

Mr. President, I am very much obliged to you for your kind introduction, but I am not entitled to claim any share in the light of Samuel Adams. (Laughter.)

I did what almost everybody who is stationed here today did in the time of the Revolutionary War. I put in all the grandfathers I had (Applause), and one of them to whom your Chairman has alluded signed the Declaration of Independence and was on the committee that brought it in; and the other was at Concord Bridge before sunrise on the nineteenth of April, with his father and his father-in-law and two brothers-in-law under his command in the company of which he was lieutenant. And my mother had three brothers who were majors or captains in the Revolutionary War. One of them commanded a Connecticut regiment at the storming of Stony Point. So the traditions of my household are satisfactory, and I think I am a member of the Sons of the Revolution by a fair hereditary title,—but I ought to say in all fairness that nearly every Massachusetts man, every New England man of Revolutionary descent, can tell about as good a story. If I go down to Middlesex and begin to brag about my ancestors, there is always some gentleman sitting on the right hand or the left who trumps my trick every time. But I

have one title, perhaps, which I may mention on this occasion which will be hard to match, and that is that my mother sat in George Washington's lap when she was a little girl; and if there are any of you who have a kinswoman who sat on a more costly or precious throne than that, you may be delighted to show your title.

The General, on his journey in 1789, was a guest at my grandfather's house in New Haven, and, as I said, my mother, who was a little girl six years old, sat in his lap, and remembered until she was eighty-three, when she died, the whole circumstance and detail of the occasion as if it had been the day before. Perhaps one story connected with that visit may be worth telling. My mother had a little sister who was eleven years old, and who of course was dressed in her best for the occasion, and when the General went out, my grandfather stood talking in the front entry with him, and this little girl opened the door. General Washington was very fond of children and like all good and sensible men he liked little girls much the better (Laughter), and he put his hand on her head and said, "My little lady, I wish you a better office." She dropped a courtesy and answered as quick as lightning, "Yes sir, to let you in."

Now, as has well been said by the speakers who have preceded me, these pictures of General Washington are to speak to you boys and girls for many a year to come. What is it that they are to say? The living speaker says what he thinks of to say; but these pictured lips will say to you a good deal that they will reflect through you. It will depend upon you what lesson you get from looking at the picture of George Washington. But there is one thing you want to be sure, all of you, to think of and to

know: George Washington by the common consent of all mankind was the greatest and best man who ever lived on this earth who was a ruler of the people. Englishmen and Germans and Frenchmen all agree with his own countrymen in that estimate of him. As the old monk said of King Alfred, "He is among the rulers of mankind better than any of the past ones and greater than any that are to come." The old world knew not his peer, and the new world will never give us his equal. And yet there is not a single thing about George Washington that is uncommon, except his absolute goodness. He was not a man of genius. He was not a poet or an enthusiast or an orator or an inventor. He was a good general, but he was not a Napoleon nor a Julius Cæsar nor a Hannibal. It was simple, every-day, common-place, corner-stone virtue; the virtues that make the happiness and the safety of every house: the virtues that you like to think of in your father and mother and sister and brother,—the commonest virtues of common human nature, that made George Washington; prudence and patience and veracity. He not only could not tell a lie, but he could not think a lie or act a lie or conceal a lie. He said, himself, in his old age that he never had broken his word to anybody in his life, and it was true. He was patient under the little and the great troubles of life. He was faithful, and that is what made George Washington. As one of the speakers told you, he schooled himself to submit to what I think is perhaps the most trying ordeal that most men have to submit to in public life,—that is, having his portrait painted. Why, Walter Scott, who used to have his portrait painted so frequently, says in his diary, that he schooled himself to stand it pretty well, but that his dog Camp, who was a favorite and a very in-

telligent dog, when he saw an artist coming up the avenue with an easel,—the dog used to be painted with Sir Walter,—would put his tail between his legs and scud off and not come back for a fortnight (Laughter). Now that is what has made George Washington the hero not only of America but of mankind, because he is the most perfect example known to humanity of what every man, woman and child can be.

You ask people what they think made up the character of George Washington, and every man and woman will answer the character that he or she has been in the habit of finding most agreeable to encounter in his or her life. I heard of a very worthy old lady in rather straitened circumstances some years ago, and somebody living in a country town asked her what sort of person she thought General Washington was. "Well," said she, "I suppose he was a person who would have been willing to lend a neighbor anything he had that she wanted to borrow." (Laughter.)

Professor Gallaudet, a good friend of mine in Washington, the head of a great college there for the deaf and dumb, told me a touching story which illustrates what I have been showing. He had a little boy among his pupils,—a little fellow born deaf and dumb, five or six years old. He was very bright and precocious and the Professor was very fond of him, and he was very fond of Dr. Gallaudet, and they used to like to talk together; one day they were talking, and he asked the little boy if he knew the story of General Washington and the hatchet, and the little fellow said he did,—telling it off with his fingers. "Well," said my friend when he told it to me, "so the little chap began to tell the story, and when he got to the right place

in the story he said, ‘and he took the hatchet in his left hand and he said to his father’—the Professor interrupted him,—“What did he take the hatchet in his left hand for?”

“Why, he wanted his right to tell him with!” The poor little fellow thought, of course, that General Washington was deaf and dumb. I might, I suppose, spend a week in talking over General Washington, but I will not any further impair the exquisite success of this occasion. It is one of the most beautiful and successful occasions I ever knew,—and the occasion owes its beauty and its success to this,—that there have been eight speakers, every one of them within the time assigned, and every one of them making such a speech that all the audience wished it were longer; and when our excellent friend, our French physician, finished his, I think we all of us wanted to say, “Oui, Monsieur, *tres bon, encore.*”

At the conclusion of the exercises, carriages were taken for the Worcester Club where the officers of the Society and the Special Committees were entertained as guests by a few members of the Society of Sons of the Revolution.

THE COMMONWEALTH PRESS
WORCESTER

39W



WERT BOOKBINDING

JAN

1989

Grantville, PA

